



# Public Relations *Manual*

**Legion** 



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# Public Relations

## **WHAT IS PUBLIC RELATIONS AND OUTREACH?**

- 101.** Over the years, the duties and obligations associated with Public Relations at the Legion has undergone several interpretations. Today, with the advent of social media, Legion Public Relations can best be described as “Outreach” because of the accepted role Public Relations Officers (PROs) have to inform both internal and external audiences. These include but are not limited to: existing members, members of the Canadian Armed Forces, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Veterans and their families, the Canadian Public, and the Youth of Canada.
- 102.** For the purposes of this manual, Public Relations is defined as the practice of managing the spread of information between the members of the Legion as well as the Public. It may include generating interest by using topics of public interest and news items that do not require a direct payment. This is perhaps the greatest distinction that can be made between “Public Relations” and “Marketing.” The latter requires money be spent to get media coverage while Public Relations, by its very nature, garners media attention and generates interest amongst the stakeholders without paying for it.
- 103.** The aim of Legion Public Relations is to persuade all stakeholders to maintain a certain point of view about the Legion, its leadership and its branding. Common activities include speaking at news conferences, working with the media and employee communication mediums – including social media.

## **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS?**

- 104.** During the first annual Dominion Convention held in Winnipeg between January 24 and 29, 1927, a policy was passed calling for the organization of Public Relations activities that would include a speakers’ bureau and a publicity liaison at Dominion Headquarters. In other words, the founding members of the Legion understood, early on, that each member

has the power and the moral obligation to help chart the Legion's future in the community.

### **WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES FACING PUBLIC RELATIONS?**

105. A recent omnibus survey conducted on behalf of the Legion confirmed that 10% of the Canadian population would like to support The Royal Canadian Legion and Veterans if afforded the opportunity to do so. This represents a potential 3 million members and/or supporters of the RCL.
106. Seen from this perspective, the role of the Legion PROs, in its simplest terms, is to turn this potential broader constituency into reality.

### **HOW WILL THIS MANUAL HELP IMPROVE BRANCH PUBLIC RELATIONS?**

107. Thank you for accepting the position of Public Relations Officer. Public Relations are a key role in today's Legion even more so than it has been in the past. This manual provides PR committees at all levels with the information they will need to conduct a solid PR campaign in support of their activities. It contains 14 chapters, each dealing with an aspect of PR. Information has also been outlined in a check-list format to help those interested in getting information on "how to do" specific tasks. The aim is to help you understand what a Public Relations Officer does and hopefully provides the tools you need to do a good job.

# PRO - Terms of Reference

## SUMMARY

- Assists the Chairperson of the provincial Outreach Committee with activities related to communications, outreach and media relations within their Provincial Command;
- Assists in the planning, development and implementation of communications strategies for the Provincial Command to raise awareness about the policies, programs and activities of The Royal Canadian Legion;
- Supports the Chairperson in providing liaison, training, guidance and assistance to branch Public Relations Officers and other identified Legion spokespersons;
- Supports branches by maintaining contact with Branch PROs to ensure policies, programs and related supplies are being received and communicated to Legion members;
- Supports branches by assisting with media training, workshops, providing media contact information and supporting with any media requirements on an as-needed basis;
- Educates Canadians about The Royal Canadian Legion's significant contributions to Canada's communities through various press, electronic, broadcast media outlets and social media;
- Supports the Chairperson in providing liaison and coordination with Dominion Command, Manager of Communications for all national communications, membership and outreach activities;
- Acts as an additional point of contact for Dominion Command with regards to communications and outreach requirements;
- Monitors best practices in communications and media relations to ensure daily activities reflect current knowledge and requirements to perform functions;
- Maintains a current listing of major media outlets and media contacts within their Provincial Command territory;

- Performs basic functions of social media including sending Tweets, updating Facebook pages; and uploading pictures/video;
- Assists with the arrangement of news conferences, editorial boards, interviews, speeches and presentations for Provincial Command elected and staff officials as required;
- Assists the Provincial President as the primary contact for public and media inquiries providing responses through maintained resources or proper referral;
- Performs other associated communication tasks at a comparable level as assigned; and
- Plans and coordinates special projects as assigned.

The ideal candidate for this position has experience in Public Relations, communications, marketing, the media, journalism, or some form of community/client relations. The PRO will have excellent verbal and written communications skills and in some jurisdictions will be required to be bilingual (French and English). The PRO will be technologically savvy with the latest versions of word processing, presentation and social media software or will be capable of getting up to speed on these products quickly and efficiently. The candidate will also have good connections to the media and other partners relevant to the Legion or the skills and ability to forge these relationships and maintain them through the term of office.

A Public Relations Officer position is one that can be very demanding of a person's time as there will be numerous activities happening within any Provincial Command at a given time. The PRO will also often be called upon by Provincial Command staff to assist communications function of the Command. To that end, this position will be staffed by a volunteer from within the Legion ranks of the Provincial Command who is either elected to the position, or is appointed by the command. A volunteer will be able to assist the paid staff of the Command by freeing up their time and effort to focus on the advocacy, membership and operational issues that are presented. Furthermore, by selecting a volunteer, the Provincial Executive Council is able to obtain the best possible candidate for the position who will bring the highest level of skills and knowledge.



# The Language of Public Relations

## TERMINOLOGY

201. The most difficult step in learning about any field is mastering the language or terminology used in the day to day workings of the art. This chapter contains brief explanations of some of the language used in the practice of PR. Others may crop up in your dealings with other people in the media or PR business but these are the most common.
- a. **Advertising:** The commercial public promotion of goods and services through any media.
  - b. **Assignment Chief:** The manager in a news agency responsible for detailing reporters to cover specific events (see also “News Editor”).
  - c. **Attribute:** To indicate spoken or written words belong to a specific individual or organization.
  - d. **Backgrounder:** A document to explain a subject in detail (see “Fact Sheet”).
  - e. **Byline:** The name of a reporter who researched and wrote a story.
  - f. **Camera Operator:** The individual responsible for filming material for broadcast. They may be mobile or studio based.
  - g. **Camera-ready:** A description of material in the final stages of preparation for printing (today it refers to the final version of work on a computer or an usb memory stick).
  - h. **Caption:** The wording under a photo, illustration or cartoon.
  - i. **Communications:** A generic term often used with confusing results, to describe Public Relations, public information and public affairs activities.
  - j. **Community Relations:** The aspect of PR which seeks to develop and maintain positive, healthy relationships, at all levels, between a Legion branch, its members and the people and institutions in the cities, towns or villages where the branches exist.
  - k. **Copy:** Printed text used to produce news, features or editorials or other printed matter for reading on air.

- l. **Cutline:** A comprehensive photo caption which provides background information about events related to the action in the photograph as well as describing the action itself.
- m. **Daily:** A newspaper published every day.
- n. **Deadline:** The latest time for material to reach a reporter or advertising representative to allow its inclusion in material being prepared for a publication or broadcast.
- o. **Exclusive:** A story being covered by only one person or one news agency, usually from a very specific point of view.
- p. **Facebook:** An online social networking service.
- q. **Fact sheet:** A document used to explain a subject or event in some detail (see Backgrounder).
- r. **Feature story:** An in-depth report on an issue with a particular viewpoint.
- s. **Graphics:** Anything that is not copy (photos, cartoons, charts, logos, etc.).
- t. **Headline:** The words at the beginning of all printed news, feature and editorial items. (Note: reporters do not write headlines – headline writers do this job.)
- u. **Image:** How a person or organization appears to the general public. Also refers to a photographic or visual representation of a person or object.
- v. **Interview:** A conversation between a journalist and a person.
- w. **Journalist:** A generic term used to describe reporters.
- x. **Leaks:** Unofficial and anonymous disclosure of information to the media.
- y. **LinkedIn:** An online networking tool that strengthens and extends your existing network of trusted contacts.
- z. **Marketing:** The business of assessing consumer needs, then creating a demand for a specific product. The four P's of marketing are Product, Price, Promotion, and Place (distribution). While a brief description of Marketing is provided in Chapter 10, the reader is advised to engage in additional research if the function of marketing and Public Relations is not understood as it is beyond the scope of this manual.

- aa. **Media:** The agencies that report, analyse, comment upon the news.
- bb. **Media Relations:** The art of working effectively with the media.
- cc. **Medium:** The means by which a message is delivered. It usually means by print, radio or TV but the Internet, social media and BLOGS are making huge gains in delivering messages.
- dd. **Monthly:** A publication which is released each month.
- ee. **News:** Reporting on very recent events. (From the word “new” or an acronym for “North, East, West and South”.)
- ff. **News Conference:** A gathering of media agencies so that they can be provided with the same message, at the same time and in the same place.
- gg. **News Editor or Director:** The manager in a media agency responsible for detailing reporters (see Assignment Chief).
- hh. **News release:** A story prepared in-house and issued to the media.
- ii. **News story:** The basic form of journalism describing an event by answering the questions who, what, when, where, why and how.
- jj. **Periodical:** A publication which appears on a regular basis.
- kk. **Photographer:** A person who takes photographs for a publication.
- ll. **Promotions:** Activities intended to attract public attention and positively influence those attracted.
- mm. **Public Affairs:** Matters having to do with the public (replaced public information which had replaced Public Relations in the federal government as the term used to describe the positive influence of public opinion).
- nn. **Public Relations:** The term used to describe the business of creating a public environment which is favourably disposed towards an organization. Sometimes referred to as “outreach” in the Legion context.
- oo. **Quotation:** Spoken or written words belonging to a specific person.
- pp. **Reporter:** A person who gathers information for print or broadcast media agencies.

- qq. Scoop:** The first story dealing with a major news event.
- rr. Social Media:** Refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks through the Internet.
- ss. Sources:** People who provide reporters with information.
- tt. Weekly:** A publication which is released each week.
- uu. Twitter:** An online social networking and microblogging service available on the Internet that allows users to send messages that are limited 140 characters called “tweets”.

# Building and Maintaining Effective Media Relations and an Internet presence

## WHY IT'S IMPORTANT FOR YOUR BRANCH

301. The media can help your branch in many ways. By getting to know and then working with local reporters, you can promote branch activities, gain recognition for significant achievements by your branch members or the branch itself thus maintaining a positive public image and building good community relations. Where a small community branch does not have any access to any media we encourage you to work with a Legion branch in the next larger municipality.
302. Through the media you can participate in public discussions about local and regional issues that are important to the branch and the members. You can even add the Legion's grass-roots voice to debates on national issues.
303. Remember that the professional media and social media provide most Canadians with all their information about international, national, regional and local events. That is why the media, all types, are the best way to reach the public about your programs and events. The positive aspects of building and maintaining good media relations can never be over-emphasized.
304. For most people, the Internet is their prime source of information and many times an organization's entire credibility is won or lost in the few seconds that it takes for a person to look at your website or social media platforms.
305. It has become increasingly easy to create a website for your branch thanks to template software for web page creation, to having someone in your branch who knows someone who can take this task on. Dominion Command also provides a generic branch webpage for branches to publish their information.
306. When it comes to social media, it is relatively easy to learn the tools to use. Just communicate the facts, keep it simple and let people know what you are up to and that they are welcome to join in!

## HOW YOUR PR COMMITTEE CAN EXPLOIT EFFECTIVE MEDIA RELATIONS

307. Successful media relations are based on mutual trust, respect and understanding, and it will be up to your committee to take the first step because most reporters cover a wide area during the course of their working day. They are often working on several story assignments at one time. Your committee is only interested in telling the Legion's story, so take the initiative.
308. You can start by getting to know who you will be dealing with. If your branch has members of the media among its membership, take advantage of their contacts and knowledge. As long as they are not put in a conflict-of-interest situation, most will be happy to advise the committee even if they cannot be active committee members.
309. You must call the local newspaper editor, or radio and TV assignment chief just to book a few minutes to get acquainted or say hello. Don't be shy. They are often very busy people but they like to know who they may be running into in the community. Most likely, they will agree to a short get-together during coffee break or lunch. This is particularly true during Veterans' Week and the Poppy Campaign.
310. Be prepared for any meeting. Gather background on your branch (history, major projects the branch may be running in the community, names and telephone numbers of branch contacts) but don't show up with a lot of paper. Be prepared to answer questions because that is what the media does, ask questions. It may seem like a social call but it will be a business meeting for both parties. Have questions of your own ready. Find out who covers service organizations or military and veterans affairs. You can ask for deadlines as well. See if there are feature writers or programs which concentrate on issues of interest to your branch. You can also get copies of the advertising rates and you can find out their policies on community service messages.
311. Once you have all this information, and the media knows who to call at the branch for information on specific items, your branch is in a position to begin a good working relationship with the media.

## **BASIC GUIDELINES YOU CAN FOLLOW**

- 312.** After you have established contact with your local media, the day-to-day dealings with your branch will determine how positive your relationship remains. Attitude is an important factor. Media spokespeople at your branch should be approachable, well informed and enthusiastic about branch matters and should be capable of dealing one-on-one with print, electronic and broadcast reporters. Here are some guidelines to follow:
- a.** Be polite and courteous;
  - b.** Be informed about their needs (deadlines, etc.);
  - c.** Use common sense when dealing with reporters;
  - d.** Be fair. News items should be provided to all agencies but some features may be selectively distributed;
  - e.** Be helpful;
  - f.** Have reasonable expectations;
  - g.** Be accurate;
  - h.** Return media calls as soon as possible;
  - i.** Never ask to see a story before it is printed or broadcast;
  - j.** Do not tell reporters or media how to do their jobs;
  - k.** Make your own arrangements to keep records of media material (it is the branch's responsibility to keep records of print or broadcast material – do not ask for clippings);
  - l.** Objectively assess the true news value to branch activities and do not waste good will by promoting stories with little or no news value or potential public interest;
  - m.** Never say “No Comment”; and
  - n.** Never boycott an agency or journalist because of a previously unfavourable report or because of a potentially unfavourable report.
- 313.** In short, take the time to know your local media. They can be of tremendous value to your branch.

# Preparing For Media Interviews

## **WHAT TO REMEMBER WHEN RESPONDING TO THE MEDIA**

- 401.** From time to time, your branch will receive queries from the media. Often these queries will be received because of information released by your own PR Committee, but they may be caused by information released from your Provincial Command or Dominion Command. No matter why the questions arise there are a number of guidelines you can follow when dealing with queries. They are:
- a. Find out exactly what the question is, what prompted it (an article or a rumour) and what the reporter wants (an interview, a branch visit, suggestions concerning interview subjects) and when it is needed (deadlines);
  - b. Get the reporter's name and the news agency represented (a sample "Media Query Worksheet" is included at Annex B in this chapter);
  - c. Be sure the branch is the right place for the journalist to be looking for information (they could be referred to a higher level – consult with the branch executive); and
  - d. Make sure the right person is acting as your branch spokesperson once the PR Committee is sure that the query belongs to the branch.

## **WHY DO THE MEDIA WANT INTERVIEWS?**

- 402.** It is the best way to quickly get facts, find varying points of view and prepare a balanced report. A story's lack of balance may be because one participant in a story did not agree to a media request for an interview and did not provide their side of the story. An interview also gives a story credibility.

## **WHY YOUR BRANCH SHOULD AGREE TO AN INTERVIEW**

- 403.** Properly handled an interview is a good way to spread the Legion's message. It can also dispel rumours, clarify points of view and confirm successes. It enhances the public image of the Legion, raises the branch's profile within the community.



## **GUIDELINES TO GIVING A POSITIVE MEDIA INTERVIEW**

- 404.** The ultimate response to a media query is a full-fledged interview. A great many people are uncomfortable with the idea of having to deal face-to-face with a reporter. This is understandable, but knowing how to give a good interview is essential for anyone who has to give public information about the Legion. Here are some guidelines:
- a.** Remember, the person being interviewed is the expert, not the reporter;
  - b.** Be certain the right person is doing the interview;
  - c.** Listen carefully to the questions and make sure only the question asked is being answered;
  - d.** In many cases, you may not have to answer the question; you can always answer any question with a position that is more reflective of the reality. For example, a common question is “We hear that membership in your branch is seriously declining, is that true?” An appropriate answer might reflect your position by saying, “The members of our branch are strong and loyal supporters of the Legion. We’re active in our community and we are encouraging new members to join every day. We have a great branch, really wonderful members and opportunities for any to join.” If you are asked again about membership declines, simply tell the reporters, sure you’d like to see more members and that’s why everyone at your branch plays a role in bringing in new members;
  - e.** Be honest (if you don’t know the answer say so);
  - f.** Be concise to avoid confusion;
  - g.** Avoid speculation;
  - h.** Never guess (get the information after the interview for a timely follow-up);
  - i.** Assume everything is “on the record”;
  - j.** Avoid policy issues other than explaining what the current policy is; and make sure you are completely certain of all relevant policies; and
  - k.** Review any background material to be given to the journalist for accuracy.
- 405.** Here are some do’s and don’ts as additional pointers:
- a.** Do avoid “yes” and ‘no’ answers;
  - b.** Do leave political questions to be answered by elected officials;

- c. Do help to assist the journalist in obtaining information;
  - d. Do be accurate;
  - e. Do return media calls as soon as possible;
  - f. Don't ask to see a story before it is released (it is the property of the media agency);
  - g. Don't tell the media how to do their job (or dictate slant);
  - h. Don't ask for clippings or tapes;
  - i. Don't be funny;
  - j. Don't lie; and
  - k. Don't assume a reporter is well informed or uninformed.
406. Most importantly, don't hesitate to contact your Provincial Command or the Dominion Command PR Staff at any time for assistance.

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**Note: Dominion Command conducts periodic media relations and interview techniques training sessions on a cost sharing basis. Contact Dominion Command for more information if you'd like to have one of these sessions at your branch.**

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# Sample Media Query Worksheet

Branch: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Reporter's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Representing: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Query: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

By Whom: \_\_\_\_\_

(Name and Title)

\_\_\_\_\_

# Writing News Releases

## WHAT IS NEWS?

- 501.** Every story in a newspaper, on radio or TV informs, educates, entertains or promotes and they all have one or more of the following elements:
- Prominence – features someone of prominence;
  - Money – losses, wins, spending, donations;
  - Sex – romance, infidelity, gender issues;
  - Disaster – floods, fires, famines, outbreaks of diseases, accidents;
  - Humour – stories that are funny; and
  - Human Interest – appeal to our natural interest in people.
- 502.** While you may not think that your branch news release contains these types of elements, stop and think about the kind of stories that you have released in the past. Then think of the kind of stories that might be the subject of a branch news release.

## LEGION NEWS

- 503.** Here are a few examples of the types of stories that your branch PR Committee may be trying to tell:
- Branch members taking part in a special event – Human Interest;
  - Volunteer efforts – Human Interest (Prominence?);
  - Fund-raising events – Money;
  - Women elected to serve as branch leaders – Sex and Prominence; and
  - Legion help after natural disasters – Human Interest and Disaster.
- 504.** Each of these stories contains one or more of the elements that can catch a reporter’s eye and get your news release printed or broadcast.

## MAKING A GOOD NEWS RELEASE

- 505.** Good writing and the passage of information makes for an excellent combination. Start with the five “W’s” – who, what, where, when and why – and the single “H” – how. It is a good way to pass along information in an uncluttered,

brief and standard format that may catch an editor's eye. They may wish to cover the happenings in greater depth using their own news staff. Keep the news release upbeat and avoid rambling narratives or overly technical descriptive passages. And avoid "jargon". Use simple language. For spelling, punctuation and other standards of style, suggest that the branch purchase the Canadian Press Style Guide or at least a good dictionary.

- 506.** Ideally a news release should only be one page long and double-spaced. Tone is very important. Because editors only want the facts, adjectives, especially superlatives, should be used sparingly.
- 507.** News releases are written from the top down, or what is known in news circles as the "inverted pyramid". The most important material is contained in the "lead" or first paragraph of the story (the five "Ws" and the "H" are usually answered here). Information of secondary importance usually including a quote from your Branch President, is contained in the "bridge" and less vital material is contained in the "body" of the release. By arranging the information in a diminishing order of importance, editors can easily cut the story from the bottom up. This is important when space is at a premium. It may mean the difference between getting your story broadcast and published or not. A sample news release is contained in Annex C in this chapter and a news release check-list is contained in Annex D.
- 508.** The news release should always be on the proper Legion letterhead (template available from Dominion Command) and contain the name and phone number of a contact person at the end of, and outside of, the release for confirmation purposes or if there are questions. Be ready to answer questions after a news release is issued.
- 509.** You must treat the media fairly and news releases should be provided to all agencies. One tip for those who want to release information to the media electronically— never send your information as an attachment. The media are very wary of the risks of virus contamination and one way of spreading them is through an attachment. It is better to copy the information being sent in the body of the e-mail itself. It will increase your chances of having it read and used.

## THE DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS RELEASES

510. A number of factors will determine how you go about distributing your news releases. They include:
  - a. Urgency – How soon must the information reach the media;
  - b. Number of agencies involved and locations; and
  - c. The delivery options available – fax, internet, e-mail, couriers, volunteers.
511. Speed of delivery will increase the more urgent your news release is. These guidelines may help.
  - a. Very urgent – same day to meet deadlines – telephone, fax, e-mail or hand delivered;
  - b. Some urgency – next working day – fax, hand delivery or e-mail; and
  - c. Routine – two to five days – regular mail, fax or e-mail.
512. It is always a good idea to call the agencies on your distribution list to ensure they have received your news release, especially for urgent cases.
513. Selecting the best distribution method and preparing to follow up are good places to start. Bear in mind that putting out a news release is no guarantee that it will turn up in the media, especially word-for-word. Competition for space and air time is fierce but if your news release is newsworthy and well written, chances are that it will be used or an editor will arrange for a reporter to show up for a visit.

## PHOTOGRAPHS AND GRAPHICS

514. Nothing enhances a story more than a good photo or graphic (diagram, crest, map, etc.). You should keep them handy and learn what your Provincial Command or Dominion Command has on hand. They can help sell your stories. If you have amateur photographers or artists in your branch try and persuade them to use their talents to help illustrate branch news releases.
515. Here are some guidelines when taking photographs for use in newspapers:
  - a. Avoid the “grip and grin” shot (two people shaking hands and smiling at the camera). If a person has won an award take a photo of that person with the

award or doing what he did to get the award. If a group receives an award take a group shot of the people with the award, but remember, make sure the faces are as big as a dime when the final product is printed. In the days of digital everything the basic rules stay the same;

- b.** Take pictures of people not inanimate objects; and
- c.** Take a number of photos and pick the best one.

**516.** For writing captions of what is in the photo, follow these basic rules:

- a.** Start by describing the action in the photo and use the present tense;
- b.** Name everyone in the photo from left to right and back to front;
- c.** If there are no people, consider lifting a quote from the news release;
- d.** Be sure you have enough to send one out with every release; and
- e.** Do not expect them back – if you need a file copy have it printed separately.

# Sample News Release



**Dominion Command  
Direction nationale**

86 place Aird Place, Ottawa, ON  
Canada K2L 0A1

1-888-556-6222

Tel.: (613) 591-3335

Fax: (613) 591-8325

[legion.ca](http://legion.ca)

## Legion Launches Virtual Wall of Honour and Remembrance for 2013

OTTAWA, ON, SEPTEMBER 13<sup>TH</sup>, 2013 – Every year, for more than ninety years, millions of Canadians have supported The Royal Canadian Legion's Poppy Campaign and Remembrance Day ceremony. They have done so by attending cenotaphs and monuments for Remembrance ceremonies held across this country and by wearing the Poppy.

Last year, Canadians were afforded another opportunity to show their respect for all Veterans: The Legion asked Canadians to send a photograph of a deceased Veteran to Dominion Command, The Royal Canadian Legion. These photos, in turn, were displayed on the large video screens located near the National War Memorial and shown prior to the Remembrance Day Ceremony held on November 11<sup>th</sup> and were later posted on the Legion's website and available to all Canadians and everyone around the world to see.

Building on its success from last year, The Royal Canadian Legion is asking Canadians to Remember and help build this "Virtual Wall of Honour and Remembrance" by sending in their photos to Dominion Command. These photos should also include the name of the deceased, years of service, element or force to which the departed belonged or regiment/unit.

Relatives or friends of a beloved Veteran may have the deceased Veterans' photo displayed on the "Virtual Wall of Honour and Remembrance."

Photos, either a high resolution digital image or a hard copy, may be sent to Dominion Command, 86 Aird Place, Ottawa, ON, K2L 0A1 (no originals please as they cannot be returned) or electronically to [rememberingthem@legion.ca](mailto:rememberingthem@legion.ca) or [aleurmemoire@legion.ca](mailto:aleurmemoire@legion.ca).

- 30 -

For further information please contact Bruce Poulin at Dominion Command, at (613) 591-3335 ext. 241 or by cell at (613) 292-8760 or [bruce.poulin@legion.ca](mailto:bruce.poulin@legion.ca).



### ABOUT THE LEGION

Established in 1901, the Legion is the largest Veterans service organization in Canada with more than 30,000 members. Its mission is to serve all Veterans including serving Canadian Forces and Royal Canadian Mounted Police members and their families, to promote Remembrance and to serve our communities and our country.

The Legion's Service Bureau Network provides assistance and representation to all Veterans including serving CF and RCMP members, and their families regarding their disability claims, benefits and services from Veterans Affairs Canada and the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, in communities across Canada. It is the Legion that perpetuates Remembrance through the Poppy Campaign and Remembrance Day ceremonies. With more than 1,400 branches, The Legion supports programs for seniors, Veterans housing, Long Term Care, youth leadership, education, sports, Cadets, Guides and Scouts. We will Remember Them.



# News Release Checklist

## TO WHOM IS THE NEWS RELEASE DIRECTED?

- Does the News Release conform to the Canadian Press Style Guide?
- Does the news release answer the five “Ws” and the “H”?
- Have all agencies been provided with a copy of the news release?
- Is the information in declining order of importance?
- Is the news release brief (200 to 250 words)?
- Is the news release on branch letterhead or appropriate stationary?
- Does the news release have a contact and a phone number?
- Is the news release dated?
- Are exact dates used for occurrence of the event?
- Is “-MORE-” used at the bottom of the page if there is more than one page?
- Does the symbol “-30-” appear at the end of the News Release?
- Is the branch executive aware that a news release is being made?
- Is there a copy on file at the branch?
- Does it include a photo with permission – (optional); and
- Does it have a short “catchy” title.

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**NOTE: The symbol “-30-” notes the end of the story. All info below that is not for publication.**

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# When and How to Hold a News Conference

## **IS YOUR BRANCH CONSIDERING HOLDING A NEWS CONFERENCE?**

- 601.** The news conference is a good way for one person, a group of people or an organization to reach a large number of journalists with the same message, at the same time in the same place. News conferences must be well-organized with particular attention paid to the needs of the media. You are hosting them after all and it is up to everyone at the branch to act as a proper host.
- 602.** A news conference is only held under exceptional circumstances and is not appropriate to announce the results of branch elections, branch sports events or any activity that common sense tells you is really routine. A news conference could be held for events like a decision by all the branches in one community to band together, a coordinated Poppy Campaign or a new program announcement.

## **HOW TO ORGANIZE A NEWS CONFERENCE**

- 603.** A news conference should observe the following guidelines:
  - a.** Be certain it is the best way to deliver the message. If your conference turns out to be a “false alarm” it is unlikely that journalists will show up for the next one;
  - b.** Select the proper spokesperson. Have subject matter experts on hand;
  - c.** Select the proper location. Be sure it can accommodate the media you expect, has adequate power supplies, is easily accessible and is comfortably warm in winter or well ventilated in summer. TV lights can get quite hot so keep them away from overhead sprinkler systems;
  - d.** Distribute invitations and send out a “Media Advisory” (Annex E) at least five days before the conference, follow-up with a phone call the day before and on the day of the conference, ensure you have a media register to record the names and agencies of the journalists attending;

- e. Prepare media kits carefully. These should be handed out prior to the news conference so that electronic media can review and make decisions on what to record. Media kits may include the following, depending on the specific event:
  - i. Copy of the news release;
  - ii. Backgrounder;
  - iii. Speeches;
  - iv. Biographies of speakers;
  - v. Script of activities; and
  - vi. Digital images.
- f. Have a moderator. He or she should state the ground rules, control the questions session for the conference and be aware of the different deadlines for the media attending (radio, TV and print in that order) and should close the news conference;
- g. Select visual aids carefully. TV reporters may want digital video and print journalists may want photographs. Copies that are not available should be provided as a follow-up action. Do not make a promise you cannot keep;
- h. Make provisions for broadcast and print reporters. Ensure the person giving the news conference is on a raised platform and that camera risers (normally at the back of the room) makes filming (still or video) over the heads of the other attendees possible. Another option is to make a large center aisle to allow camera operators freedom of movement; and
- i. Be sure proper audio feed equipment is available - (multi-boxes allow radio journalists to plug in and tape the proceedings without placing a microphone in front of the person giving the conference).

- 604.** Ideally, news conferences should take place between 10 and 11 a.m. This allows assignment chiefs time to locate and assign reporters and gives the reporters time to prepare. These timings also allow editors and news directors a good chance to feature the material obtained on noon news casts and in the early afternoon or evening editions. News conferences not planned for these times run the risk of being overtaken by fast-breaking news stories. Journalists or reporters are notorious for running late so that the later a news conference is planned the more likely the chances are that a reporter or journalist may be reassigned.
- 605.** News conferences must be well organized with great care given to the needs of the media. They should be used to announce events of major significance. By using the guidelines herein you should be able to run a successful news conference. It is an excellent way to spread the word about major events at your branch.

# Sample Media Advisory



## Dominion Command Direction nationale

86 place Aird Place, Ottawa, ON  
Canada K2L 0A1  
1-888-556-6222  
Tel: (613) 591-3335  
Fax: (613) 591-9335

[legion.ca](http://legion.ca)

## Legion Announces New Riders Program and new Logo

OTTAWA, ON July 16th, 2013 – The Dominion President of The Royal Canadian Legion, Mr. Gordon Moore, accompanied by several motorcycle enthusiasts, will make an announcement on Friday July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013 regarding the new Legion Riders program and the new Legion brand and logo.

Representatives from Government, Canadian Forces, Veterans, Veterans Groups, Legion members and the public are welcome.

**Location:** Legion House  
86 Aird Place  
Ottawa ON K2L 0A1  
Tel: 613-591-3335

**Date:** 19 July 2013

**Time:** 9am – Motorcycle enthusiasts arrive at Kanata Centrum Shopping Centre parking lot situated at the corner of Kanata Avenue and Earl Grey Drive;

9:30am – Motorcycle enthusiasts leave parking lot, southbound on Kanata Avenue from Earl Grey Drive, cross Valour Bridge and turn eastward along Aird Place and park in designated area of Legion House parking lot.

10am – Dominion President addresses media and motorcycle enthusiasts;

10:30 – Small reception.

-30-

*For further information please contact Bruce Poulin at Dominion Command, The Royal Canadian Legion at (613) 591-3335 ext. 241 or by cell at (613) 292-8760 or [bruce.poulin@legion.ca](mailto:bruce.poulin@legion.ca).*

File: 44-12 160713



### ABOUT THE LEGION

Established in 1925, the Legion is the largest Veterans service organization in Canada with more than 300,000 members. Its mission is to serve all Veterans including serving Canadian Forces and Royal Canadian Mounted Police members and their families, to promote Remembrance and to serve our communities and our country.

The Legion's Service Bureau Officers can assist and represent CF members, Veterans, RCMP members and their families regarding disability claims or related issues with Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) and the Veterans Review and Appeal Board (VRAB) in communities across Canada, it is the Legion that perpetuates Remembrance through the Poppy Campaign and Remembrance Day ceremonies. With more than 1400 branches, The Legion supports programs for seniors, Veterans housing, Living Term Care, youth leadership, education, sports, Cadets, Guides and Scouts. We will Remember Them.

MEDIA ADVISORY

# Responses: Letters to the Editor, blog posts, and other forms of responding

## **WHY WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF A NEWSPAPER, OR RESPOND TO SOMEONE'S BLOG OR FACEBOOK COMMENT?**

- 701.** In Canada, Letters to the Editor are a popular way for people to express their opinions about the issues of the day. Responding to someone's blog may be a way to further support for your position, your branch activities, or to enhance awareness of your branch in general. Facebook posts may well do the same. In any case, a response should definitely correct wrong information that has been published or presented. Most newspapers have a space for Letters to the Editor as do magazines and branch publications. In the online world there is almost always a response mechanism that will allow for the opportunity to provide additional information, to comment, or to provide a corrective statement. For Legion members, these responses fall into two very broad categories:
- a.** Those which directly concern The Royal Canadian Legion – its policies, related programs, events and activities; and
  - b.** Those which deal with matters not related to The Royal Canadian Legion but contain personal opinions or comments from people identified as being associated with the Legion.

## **WHAT CAN BE GAINED?**

- 702.** Let's go back to the "why" in section 701. The reasons mentioned there all have some positive potential. You can correct things or challenge views published earlier. This can be used to publicly inform or educate readers. This is especially true around the Poppy Campaign and Remembrance Day when letters from Veterans are received with particular enthusiasm by the editors. They can stimulate public discussion on important issues.

## POINTS TO REMEMBER

- 703.** Letters to the Editor or other forms of response can be used to good effect in many circumstances but they also have the power to provoke negative public opinion. If anyone in your branch asks what they should consider before they write a Letter to the Editor or respond to a statement, they should consider the following:
- a.** Letters to the Editor or responses to online comments are the responsibility of their authors. Be sure you have your facts correct because the Legion will not be held liable for any damages that arise from legal action taken against a member for his unofficial correspondence with a media agency or other organization or individual;
  - b.** There is no guaranty that the letter will be published. Some online responses are previewed before being published or can be deleted by the blog or post manager;
  - c.** The editorial page editor has the right to edit the letter which may change its meaning and the letter that appears in print may not convey the idea originally intended by the author. Statements made in the letter may also be taken out of context;
  - d.** Use of Legion titles is the prerogative of the author, however when they are used in an unofficial capacity it should be made clear that the opinions expressed are entirely personal and do not reflect the position of the branch, the Provincial Command or Dominion Command; and
  - e.** Letters or responses not only stimulate debate but can often revitalize issues that are best forgotten.
- 704.** The importance of correcting media reports is often exaggerated and the advantages of doing so should be weighed against the disadvantages. Bad information is often forgotten before a letter is published, and once it has been published the damage has been done. You can achieve a degree of satisfaction for those directly concerned but there is no guaranty that those who saw the original report will see the letter or response you generate.
- 705.** A Letter to the Editor is a popular form of self-expression but is difficult to use when dealing with controversial issues that involve Legion policies. Use common sense when thinking about writing a Letter

to the Editor and get second opinions from friends, family members or other legionnaires. These opinions can be valuable indicators of whether a Letter to the Editor is appropriate or advisable. Remember that the points listed are only guidelines. They should not be used to discourage legionnaires from writing to their local newspapers but should be used by those who consider this action to carefully reflect on its impact. Legionnaires who disagree with Legion policy should express their concerns through the chain of command and not through their local media.

- 706.** For guidelines on Letters to the Editor or other forms of response please see the media section of The Royal Canadian Legion website for examples of these items.



# Community Relations

## WHAT IS IT?

**801.** Community relations is that part of the Public Relations effort which seeks to develop and maintain a positive, healthy relationship between Legion members and their branch with the people and institutions in the communities where they live. The way branch members see others and the way they are regarded will help determine the branch's standing in its community. Like most other PR functions, keeping good community relations is plain common sense.

## HOW TO GO ABOUT IT

- 802.** In most communities where there is a Legion branch, the members of that branch are usually permanent with a long-term interest in supporting their city, town or village. They already have a solid connection with their communities, and that connection is key because it makes it much easier for the branch to find its place in the community. There are active measures which can be taken to build on that connection and to enhance relations with the community leaders and the general public.
- 803.** Regular contact with the key stakeholders in the community and the members of the Legion branch is the best way to create and maintain good relations. To that end, the following activities are worth considering:
- a. Open house events for the public and for special groups;
  - b. The establishment of affiliations with other groups;
  - c. Sponsoring events in affiliation with other groups or local media outlets;
  - d. Sharing your facilities; and
  - e. Participation in community events.
- 804.** The aforementioned activities are good ways to stay in touch with certain elements of the community but remember, the actual day-to-day contact between Legion members and the residents takes place in the streets, malls, theatres and restaurants in that community.

- 805.** Establishing good two-way communication can help incidents from developing into serious problems. The branch should establish good community relationships with elected officials, the police, the fire department, local clergy and other community service organizations.

### **KEEPING A COMMUNITY SURVEY FILE**

- 806.** A community survey file is a record which may be kept by a branch and its PR Committee indicating points that may lead to potential cooperation and interaction between groups. It is little more than a list of ideas which names organizations, contacts and phone numbers that could benefit from Legion assistance. Some of these may include:
- a.** Canadian Forces base or RCMP representatives;
  - b.** Political leaders at all levels – Federal, Provincial and Municipal;
  - c.** Business leaders/owners located near the branch;
  - d.** Media contacts;
  - e.** Seniors groups and residences;
  - f.** Youth groups;
  - g.** Vocational therapy groups;
  - h.** Support groups for handicapped people; and
  - i.** Hospital and nursing homes.
- 807.** Becoming a good corporate citizen is not difficult but it does mean getting involved in your community and giving back some of the support it gives to a branch. The remainder is good manners and common sense.

# Creating and Keeping a Positive Image

## **IMAGE DEFINED**

**901.** Image is that mental picture that springs to mind when the name of a person or company is mentioned. When you hear someone say “The Royal Canadian Legion”, what do you think of?

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF IMAGE**

**902.** The Royal Canadian Legion has an image; it is largely positive. However, maintaining that image calls for hard work on the part of every member because an organization’s image will influence how people think about its members, policies and programs. Every member of The Royal Canadian Legion projects the image of the Legion and your actions enhance this image.

**903.** In the same Environics omnibus survey we mentioned earlier, we have also learned the following about the Legion’s image:

- a. Some 25% of Canadians think of the Legion when they hear the word Poppy;
- b. We impact the lives of millions of Canadians;
- c. Track & Field program builds our next Olympians; and
- d. The Legion is seen as a leader among other Veterans organizations.

## **MAINTAINING THE LEGION’S POSITIVE PUBLIC IMAGE**

**904.** Here are some guidelines to help improve and maintain the Legion’s image in your community:

- a. Actively promote the branch’s good works through the media, online and to every one of your branch’s members. Be pro-active. Create and disseminate the messages that reflect what your branch is doing or has accomplished. Every time you make a donation or start an initiative that will benefit your community you should take every effort to publicise it;
- b. Make sure that each time your branch sponsors or supports a cause or an organization, that a public association is made with the Legion; and

- c. When problems arise or mistakes are made, admit it and take the necessary corrective action. An example of this is if drinking and driving are associated with branch social events, you may be able to solve the problem by inviting the local police to conduct an awareness session at the branch and inviting the media to cover them.
- 905.** A positive public image is essential to help ensure the continued support of the Legion's many and varied community support programs. Each member can contribute by using his or her personal common sense and remembering that the actions of each individual member can influence how the public views the Legion.
- 906.** At least once per year, your branch should host an open house to allow all members of the community to see what's behind your doors. One of the biggest misconceptions about the Legion is that to join, a person must have a military background. When your branch hosts an open house, you get the chance to show off what happens at your branch and can share this with everyone in the community. An open house also demonstrates your branch's willingness to be an inclusive member of the community and a place for the community to gather during important events.

# Marketing

- 1001.** Marketing is the ability of an organization to create awareness, interest, desire and action in its products or services targeted to the potential users of the products or services. Certainly, in many cases, this is meant for commercial purposes. Your branch needs to market itself just like any other organization because all Legion branches face real competition in the communities where they are located. Marketing is nothing more than the ability, generally through paid means, of creating the awareness of your branch that will bring in new members, promoting the activities of your branch to existing members, or attracting people to a function within your branch. Without question, there are many avenues open to your branch to generate awareness through non-paid means and the majority of what you have read in this manual speaks to this. Marketing and Public Relations must work hand in hand and they are certainly not mutually exclusive.
- 1002.** We should not limit ourselves to thinking that marketing is just buying advertising space in a newspaper, website, on TV or the radio. Financial resources in most branches are spread very thin and any thinking around investing in marketing must be carefully weighed out with clear rationale and measurable objectives defined up-front. Look first within your branch to find out if you have any members with marketing expertise or connections in the local area as this can be a valuable starting point, both in terms of learning and leveraging existing connections.
- 1003.** One of the simplest ways to start marketing and Public Relations planning is to look back on all the activities your branch engages in on a regular basis over the course of the year. Which are regular events that require marketing and Public Relations efforts? The Poppy Campaign, local parades, special monthly dinner events, gold tournaments, curling bonspiels, membership renewal periods, Canada Day, and branch anniversaries are just some examples of dates that should be considered where marketing and PR efforts

will be needed. When you map these events out, it becomes easier to plan for these activities. Certainly other activities or opportunities will arise throughout the year that you couldn't have planned for, but by making an initial calendar of events, you will start to have things well in hand.

- 1004.** There are a host of valuable “marketing opportunities” that branches engage in everyday that is already being paid for, but we don't think of them that way. We often don't explore what can be fully leveraged from the spending that happens in our branches. For example, does your branch sponsor a youth athletics team? Well that's marketing, especially if you branch puts its logo, or the Legion crest on the team's jerseys. Have you ever asked the entire team – coaches, family members and all – to come back to your branch for a post-game BBQ? Think of the people that this invitation would bring into your branch. Do you share pictures of the team on your branch website? Who are the parents of the team members and are they branch members? They have knowledge of the Legion, thanks to your sponsorship, so why not ask them to take that gratitude to the level becoming a member of your branch.
- 1005.** How about the TV's you have in your branch? Do any of them make money for your branch? There are branches that have a computer hooked up to a TV to deliver a PowerPoint presentation advertising local businesses near the branch. These branches charge \$100 a month for the ads and with 10 advertisers bring in \$1,000 a month.
- 1006.** Other branches use the business cards of their Branch Executive or other members as “calling cards” or “free passes”. When they hand them out, they tell people that if they come to the branch and show the business card they'll be readily welcomed. This is a great way to encourage people to visit the branch.
- 1007.** As with any organization, your branch buys products and services. Have you spoke to the beer, food, phone or internet suppliers to see what way your branch may be able to benefit from events, activities, or sponsorships these groups are engaged in or can provide? What prizes might they be able to give your branch based on the business you regularly do with them? Most times people are too shy to make these

requests but the worst thing that can happen is you will be told no... but at least you asked. Always ask who else the company representative might know and could refer you to for support.

- 1008.** If your branch doesn't have its kitchen open regularly, have you approached the local restaurants in the area to see if they would deliver to your branch? These restaurants might appreciate the extra business and your branch will still keep its bar sales and give people even more reason to come into the branch.
- 1009.** So, you see marketing isn't just about spending money. Marketing is about collaboration, cooperation and taking the time to explore every relationship your branch has where you can create awareness, interest, desire and action. Another key aspect worth mentioning is the ability to keep a keen eye out for what other organizations in your community are doing that you may be able to imitate and adapt to suit the needs of your branch.
- 1010.** A great unknown concept in marketing is extensive R&D. When we present this concept you may be thinking of Research & Development. However, what is really meant by this marketing concept is Rip off & Duplicate! Think about it. If you see events, campaigns or activities happening in your community that you believe you can modify to be marketing initiatives for your Legion branch, do not hesitate to explore these opportunities. Please be very careful not to duplicate the efforts exactly since many campaigns are trademarked. There are many wonderful ideas out there we can use without having to reinvent the marketing wheel.
- 1011.** One point regarding marketing that deserves special consideration, is to be very cautious of "free" marketing and communications opportunities and this particularly start to the use of social media. With social media, sure the tools to communicate your messages are available at no cost, but someone must devote their time and energy to using them. There is a cost to this, even if it is done by a volunteer. Free marketing opportunities, like sending out flyers or newsletters via email, also have a cost associated with them and again, time and energy are put into the development and dissemination of these materials. Legion branches

can get caught in a real trap of using up valuable volunteer effort and time in chasing free marketing that ultimately delivers no results. Again, do not engage in any marketing activity unless it is well planned and there are results expected from it.



# Public Relations in Times of Crisis

## DEFINING IT AND REACTING TO IT

**1101.** The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines “crisis” as a “turning point or a time of danger”. The Royal Canadian Legion, like any large organization, will occasionally face such situations or be able to assist our communities in times of crisis and must be prepared to operate under very difficult conditions. No matter the cause of a crisis, effective Public Relations will be a major component of crisis management. It is therefore, a good idea to react quickly to fix a problem and minimize the chances of bad publicity. Think of what Tylenol did when it faced the issue of tampering with its over-the-counter medications. Remember what Maple Leaf Foods did when it was found that its cold meat products led to the deaths of several Canadians. An immediate, open and direct approach to crises, combined with a care and concern for the parties involved can help deal with almost any situation that may arise.

## YOUR BRANCH IS NOT IMMUNE

- 1102.** You may think that crises occur only at the Provincial and Dominion Command levels but, there is also potential for disaster at your branch. Think of the flooding crisis that hit Alberta in the summer of 2013; a forest fire that approaches a town in central B.C.; landslides that may affect a small community in Newfoundland & Labrador. We must be prepared. Some recent issues specific to the Legion have involved the misuse of Poppy Trust Funds, a party gone wrong or even a branch closure for noise complaints. The following are some guidelines to help your branch PR Committee, and your branch, deal with a crisis situation:
- a. Get the facts – review the situation and assess the Public Relations implications. The military strategy that aligns with this is Boyd’s loop, or sometimes referred to as the OODA loop – *Orient, Observe, Decide and Act*. *Orient* yourself and your branch executive to the situation and get as much detail

as you can. *Observe* what has happened, what is happening and who has responded already. *Decide* what actions your branch can take and then *Act* on them;

- b. Get relevant information to the public as soon as possible (maximum disclosure – minimum delay is the key);
- c. Update the public as new material becomes available;
- d. Be available yourself or have a member of the executive available (accessibility shows openness and progress to the public and the media - these are two important image builders during a time of crisis); and
- e. Be thorough (pass the same information to all media, maintain a media log).

### **HOW YOUR BRANCH PERFORMS IS WHAT MATTERS**

- 1103.** How your branch performs in a crisis will influence how the public regards the Legion in your community, and as a whole. The public's impression of how well a crisis is handled often stems from the media. It may not provide the true angle of how a crisis was handled. It is your task to ensure the media and the public know what was done in a timely fashion.

# Special Events

## WHAT ARE THEY?

**1201.** A special event is either something that takes place outside the usual schedule of branch activities (e.g. a special donation, an open house) or a routine activity of major significance (e.g. Remembrance Day Ceremony, launch of the annual Poppy Campaign). They all have three things in common for PR purposes – **planning, promotion and execution**. We have touched on special events in the section on Marketing – the importance of planning helps your branch get a good handle on executing these events with great success.

## WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

**1202.** Special events are valuable means of building and maintaining good community relations but most importantly, they offer excellent opportunities to inform the public about other branch activities and encourage people to become members of your branch.

## ORGANIZING, PROMOTING AND CONDUCTING A SPECIAL EVENT

**1203.** The following check-list contains major factors which must be considered by the people who have been given the responsibility of coordinating the event:

### a. **Planning:**

- i. Decide, with the branch executive, why you are holding this event. Ideally, it should be to inform, educate, drive membership or entertain;
- ii. Get a clear statement of responsibilities for event related activities from the branch executive – who is doing what, when and what will they need;
- iii. Prepare a time-plan for critical deadlines leading up to the event;
- iv. Identify the audience or audiences;
- v. Decide if this event is annual or one-of-a-kind;
- vi. Plan regular meetings with all people involved in the event to report progress and address any issues as they arise; and
- vii. Keep the branch executive informed of progress and developments.

**b. Promotion:**

- i. Get the information to branch members with electronic or printed newsletters, flyers, posters or announcements at meetings. Post through social media;
- ii. Get the information to external audiences using news releases, appearances on local radio and television;
- iii. Share the information with local businesses who may be able to help promote the event, particularly if it means potential extra traffic for them;
- iv. Ensure if your local municipal government officials are aware of the event and invite them to attend if appropriate;
- v. Invite local media representatives to preview the event 24 hours before it is scheduled or attend dress rehearsals;
- vi. Name spokespersons or media contacts;
- vii. Secure any permits or licences required (e.g. parade permits, special occasion permits); and
- viii. Ensure appropriate arrangements are made for media needs if you are expecting the media to attend.

**c. Execution:**

- i. Select an easily accessible location;
- ii. Select alternate locations (wet weather program);
- iii. Ensure required facilities are available at all locations;
- iv. Decide on public address system requirements;
- v. Arrange for personal contact among key personnel (cell phones etc.);
- vi. Issue VIP invitations (if applicable);
- vii. Ensure print material is prepared to allow for any contingency;
- viii. Ensure parking areas are ready and a pass system is arranged if necessary;
- ix. Ensure signage is posted to direct people to your site if needed and cordon off restricted areas where you don't want the public to enter;
- x. Ensure catering arrangements have been made if necessary;
- xi. Prepare for accidents and contingencies;

- xii.** After the event, plan to meet with all those involved in planning and execution and produce report when the event is finished; and
- xiii.** Make recommendations based on the report to improve future events.

# The Internet and Social Media

## THE INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA

- 1301.** Since 1997, Dominion Command of The Royal Canadian Legion has been online and all the Provincial Commands and many of the branches now have a website and this number is increasing. The Legion's national web site at [www.legion.ca](http://www.legion.ca) provides a wealth of information on all of the national programs, links to other web sites that may be of interest as well as a branch locator and e-mail links to those that have addresses. Most of the resources you need for your branch are also available on this website. For these reasons, the PRO should become very familiar with these Internet resources. The exclusive member webstore is [www.shop.legion.ca](http://www.shop.legion.ca) where individuals and branches may purchase products available through Legion Supply.
- 1302.** It is vital that your branch at least have an email address where information, tools and resources can be sent, not only from Dominion or Provincial Commands, but also from your members. Additionally, having a computer in your branch allows you to have better, faster, cheaper access to your members and opens up the channels of communication that will make running your branch that much easier. At branches, the computer can be a source of providing information to the members and to the general public.
- 1303.** A web site can reflect the best of the Legion at work in your community and it should include information on events, membership in the branch as well as programs. Sharing photographs or videos highlighting the activities of your branch is a great way to show how much goes on in your branch that will entice people to join, or keep their membership. Newsletters and flyers can be posted online and shared with members to save mailing costs and the media can access biographies of branch executives and information. In short, your website, social media presence, and the tools available from the Internet are powerful additions to the overall Public Relations and marketing efforts your branch needs to engage in. Don't think these tools are only for younger people.

- 1304.** Social media has become one of the most powerful tools to reach a large audience quickly, efficiently and effectively. It involves building relationships and engaging your audience in an impactful way. It can be used to share and promote information, increase your audience base, convert fans into members, volunteers and donors, support fundraising initiatives, and foster community engagement.
- 1305.** The Legion's online presence is developed over time through consistent branding, messaging and engagement. As the Legion works to support and grow our online presence, we are able to create a stronger organization and a more positive image of the Legion with the Canadian public.

- 1401.** Each member of The Royal Canadian Legion has the power and the moral obligation to help chart the Legion's future. This requires an ability to inform your own members, members of the Legion around the world, Veterans and the public about the policies, programs and activities of The Royal Canadian Legion and your branch. There are many ways to do this through Public Relations and marketing in both traditional and social media. Remember your overall goals with all Public Relations and marketing activities are to create awareness about your branch, interest people to join the Legion and to make people want to participate in your events.
- 1402.** The Marketing & Membership Department at Dominion Command is available to you to help with any of the items described in this manual and it would be our pleasure to offer any assistance we can to support your Public Relations and marketing efforts. Please don't hesitate to call on us at 1-855-330-3344 or send us an e-mail at **marketing@legion.ca**.
- 1403.** Good luck with all your activities and events. Now that you know some of the basics of Public Relations and marketing you will be off to a great start!

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**NOTE: PROs are also reminded that any PRO leaving their position should pass their files to their successor to ensure a smooth transition.**

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*Our mission is to serve  
Veterans, which includes  
serving military and RCMP  
members and their families;  
to promote Remembrance;  
and to serve our communities  
and our country.*

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